

Gozzi, made Pantaleone a philistine, who used good sense against the follies of fashion. No women were present at these comedies at Venice at this time.¹

Scherillo² quotes Peracci, that at the end of the seventeenth century the folk theater was obscene in word and act beyond the ancient comedies. If that is true, it is only a detail of the degeneracy of Italy from the middle of the sixteenth century.

669. Summary and review. It is evident that amusement and relaxation are needs of men. The fondness for exhibitions and theatrical representations can be traced through history. The suggestion is direct and forcible. It can be made to play upon harmful tastes as well as upon good ones. There is nothing to guide it or decide its form and direction except the mores, — the consenting opinion of the masses as to what is beneficial or harmful. The leading classes try to mold this opinion. The history shows that the mores can make anything right, and protect any violation of the sex taboo or of ordinary propriety. There is no subject in regard to which the mores need more careful criticism than in regard to amusements. The standard and the usage degenerate together unless there is control by an active and well-trained taste and sense. The popular taste and sense are products of inherited mores. It is this reflex action of habitual acts and experiences which makes the subject difficult. All the primary facts and the secondary or remoter reflections are intertwined as in an organic growth, and all go together. The facts exert constant education, and every positive effort to interfere with the course of things by primitive education must be content to exert slight effects for a long time.

Wealth and
luxury exert their evil effects through amusement.
Poverty cuts
down these products of wealth and brings
societies back to
simplicity and virtue. Men renounce when
they cannot get.
The periods of economic and social decay have
cut off the
development of forms of amusement, arrested
vice, and forced
new beginnings.
670. Amusements need the control of educated
judgment and
will. The history shows that amusements are a
pitfall in which

¹ Masi, *Teatro ItaL*, 89, 232, 264. ² *La Commedia del Arte*>
50.